

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 231

UNCLAS BERN 0603

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, SZ

SUBJECT: ALLEGED OVERFLIGHT PROPOSAL

REF: BERN 0590

1. 24 HEURES (LAUSANNE) ON FEBRUARY 11 CARRIED FOLLOWING
STORY:

"THE FAUX-PAS OF A FUTURE AMBASSADOR.

EVEN BEFORE HE HAS ASSUMED HIS POST IN BERN, THE NEW
U.S. AMBASSADOR, MR. PETER DOMINICK, IS PROVOKING SMALL
DIPLOMATIC INCIDENTS. WHEN HE WAS INTERVIEWED IN WASHINGTON
BY THE CORRESPONDENTS OF THE TRIBUNE DE GENEVE AND THE TAGES
ANZEIGER, HE DECLARED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS WHICH
HE WOULD HAVE TO DEAL WITH IN BERN WOULD BE THE RIGHT OF
FLYING OVER SWITZERLAND IN CASE SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN
IN THE NEAR EAST.

MR. DOMINICK MENTIONED TRANSPORT OF WAR MATERIEL
AND, ACCORDING TO HIM, THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONTACTS
BETWEEN THE PENTAGON AND SWISS MILITARY PERSONALITIES
AS WELL AS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

HOWEVER, THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON, AND ALSO
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THE PENTAGON, HASTENED TO DENY MR DOMINICK'S AFFIRMATIONS

AND TO DECLARE THAT THERE WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING. THE SPECIALIST FOR SWISS AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT HAS ADDED: "WE ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE SWISS POLITICAL DOCTRINE."

THE SWISS FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT AND THE AIR OFFICE ON THEIR PART HAVE SPECIFIED THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN QUESTION OF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING THE RIGHT TO FLY OVER OUR COUNTRY, AND THAT NO EVEN FEELERS HAD BEEN PUT OUT BY THE UNITED STATES.

SUCH FLIGHTS ARE AUTHORIZED ONLY IF NO ARMS ARE CARRIED. ON THIS OCCASION THE SWISS FEDERAL AIR OFFICE HAS REVEALED THAT DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR TWO OF THEIR STAFF MEMBERS WENT TO FRANKFURT TO VERIFY THE CARGO OF THE AMERICAN PLANES WHICH RECEIVED PERMISSION TO FLY OVER SWITZERLAND.

THIS IS A BIT TOO MUCH*

THIS IS A CRAZY STORY.

OUR COLLEAGUES DOMINIQUE VON BURG AND VIKTOR SCHLUMPF, WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS OF THE "TRIBUNE DE GENEVE" AND "TAGES ANZEIGER," HAD THE ... GOOD LUCK TO HEAR THE FUTURE AMBASSADOR MAKE THESE STATEMENTS HIMSELF. NEITHER OF THEM IS A JESTER OR PRACTICAL JOKER.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT, OUR POLITICAL DEPARTMENT AND OUR MILITARY DEPARTMENT ALL AFFIRM IN UNISON THAT THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD OF TROOP TRANSPORTS OR TRANSPORTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THROUGH OUR AIR SPACE. THEY MAY BE BELIEVED: NOT FOR A MOMENT WOULD SWITZERLAND CONSIDER SUDDENLY SELLING OUT ITS NEUTRALITY. THUS, HAD A STAFF MEMBER OF THE FORD ADMINISTRATION TRIED TO APPROACH BERN, IT MAY BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT HIS PROPOSALS, OR HIS TRIAL BALLOONS, WOULD SIMPLY HAVE CAUSED AMUSED SMILES.

BUT THEN, MR. PETER DOMINICK IS SUPPOSED TO TAKE UP HIS POST ON THE AARE RATHER SOON. AND HE SAYS THINGS WHICH INDICATE A MONUMENTAL, CATASTROPHIC, LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE COUNTRY WHERE HE IS GOING TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS.

QUESTION: WILL HE REMAIN "PERSONA GRATA." OR TO SPEAK LESS DIPLOMATICALLY: IS IT REALLY IN BERN THAT THIS BLUNDERER, A FORMER SENATOR FROM COLORADO, SHOULD GET CONSOLATION FOR HIS RECENT ELECTORAL DEFEAT?

WE ARE WAITING FOR THE REPLY WHICH THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

JUDGES APPROPRIATE."

2. HERALD TRIBUNE OF FEBRUARY 11 RAN FAIRLY LENGTHY AP STORY
DATELINED BERN ON SENATOR DOMINICK'S ALLEGED STATEMENT ON
OVERFLIGHT AND DENIALS. WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS THIS STORY.
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